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**AFRICA: SOUTH OF THE SAHARA**

By

EMILY BRIDGERS



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CHAPEL HILL

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## The Land and Its People

*Look how old Africa is, how strangely made, how unaltered. What is there in it that baffles us? Why can it not go forward as other continents have done? Brilliant men come here to solve its problems and go away defeated. But that is why it holds us: it has this mystery.*

—GENERAL SMUTS



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## PROGRAM I

### SONG OF AFRICA

Of the books which speak most clearly the nature and fascination of Africa, two are preeminent: Isak Dinesen's *Out of Africa* and Laurens van der Post's *Venture to the Interior*.

*Out of Africa* is tender and passionate in its love of the land and its people, reflecting Isak Dinesen's gift for lyrical expression stirred profoundly by her life in the peaceful highlands of East Africa. Her identification with the beloved country is complete: "The grass was me," she writes, "and the air, the distant invisible mountains were me, the tired oxen were me. I breathed with the slight night-wind in the thorn-trees." Colonel van der Post in *Venture to the Interior* is concerned with the "tremendous physical drama of Africa" and with moral ideas to which that drama gives rise. Contemplating the great central section where lies the little-known country of blue lakes like seas, and towering majestic mountains "set in great open spaces," he is ever conscious of the terror for man that lurks in this self-contained land, a land that does not "as yet care much about human beings."

Isak Dinesen is the pseudonym of the Danish born Countess Karen Blixen, who went with her husband to Kenya Colony (today's land of the Mau Mau) in the days when there was a peaceful relation between the native Africans and the white settlers. She remained to run a six thousand acre coffee plantation for some seventeen years. Laurens van der Post tells in his book of himself and his forebears.

#### I. In the Ngong Hills

"If I know a song of Africa—of the Giraffe, and the African new moon lying on her back, of the ploughs in the fields, and the sweaty faces of the coffee-pickers, does Africa know a song of me? Would the air over the plain quiver with a colour that I had had on, or the children invent a game in which my name was, or the full moon throw a shadow over the gravel of the drive that was like me, or would the eagles of the Ngong hills look out for me?"

—ISAK DINESEN

*Out of Africa*, by Isak Dinesen

"Up in this high air you breathed easily, drawing in a vital assurance and lightness of heart. In the highlands you woke up in the morning and thought: Here I am, where I ought to be." There are many such evocations of the feel and substance of Africa in this book. Read from them. Do not fail to include portions of the long description of

the African night "resplendent with stars," where is "infinite freedom," where "destinies are made round you," where the air vibrates with "the distant short roar of the lion."

Isak Dinesen's writing of the animals of Africa has never been surpassed: "I had seen a herd of Buffalo, one hundred and twenty-nine of them, come out of the morning mist under a copper sky, one by one, as if the dark and massive, iron-like animals with the mighty horizontally swung horns were not approaching, but were being created before my eyes and sent out as they were finished." Select other descriptions which seem to you imaginative and final. Do tell of Lulu, the gazelle—Lulu with her "air of a young Chinese lady" and her "elegant confidence."

Isak Dinesen's contentment was nourished chiefly by her relationship with the natives. ". . . from my first weeks in Africa," she says, "I had felt a great affection for the Natives . . . The discovery of the dark races was to me a magnificent enlargement of all my world." And she adds, "The Natives were Africa in flesh and blood . . . small figures in an immense scenery . . . and when the tall, slim, dark, and dark-eyed people travel,—always one by one, so that even the great Native veins of travel are narrow foot-paths,—or work the soil, or herd their cattle, or hold their big dances, or tell you a tale, it is Africa wandering, dancing and entertaining you." Tell of her friendship with Kinanjui, the Chief of the Kikuyu, who had "much real greatness to him," or relate the story of Kamante, the small Kikuyu goatherd whom she met on the plain and took home to become her friend. Comment on the relationship of mutual trust.

Santha Rama Rau says of her impressions of Africa that the quality she loves best and recalls most clearly is "the strange interior gaiety of the Africans." This gaiety is wonderfully illustrated by the old Kikuyu women, whose strength and love of life, says Isak Dinesen, "to me, seemed not only highly respectable, but glorious and bewitching." Tell of the old women.

Picture the Kikuyu people through the eyes of Isak Dinesen, illustrating the qualities she describes: gentleness, courage ("They had real courage: the unadulterated liking of danger"), sincerity of character, fortitude and resignation, a wonderful strain of malice, responsiveness, sense of justice (so different from that of the white man), regard for the land—land on which to feed their cattle, their only and greatly prized wealth.

In contrast to the gentle Kikuyu, who "judge you not," is "the strange dying nation," the Masai, who "will bear you a grudge. They all bear us a grudge, which will be wiped out only when the tribe is wiped out itself." Describe that true aristocrat, the Masai warrior. (Ironically it is not the warlike Masai but the Kikuyu who have become world renowned for the terroristic methods of their secret society, the Mau Mau.)

Farah, Isak Dinesen's head servant, thoughtful and decorous in his "red and blue turban, black embroidered Arab waistcoat and Arab silk robe," was a Somali, a Mohammedan, a "stranger" among the Kikuyu.

Tell of his differing customs and particularly of the women of his household, their disciplined training, and the charm of their maidenly prudery as Isak Dinesen so delightfully describes them.

Love of Africa is given expression on every page of this book but nowhere more poignantly than at the end when Isak Dinesen is compelled to leave her friends and the life which has meant so much to her. Tell of the parting and of the problem of her people's future.

As you put this book aside, do you agree with Bernardine Kielty when she says of Isak Dinesen's life in Africa that "Paradise for a time was hers"?

## 2. *This Ancient Land*

" . . . this antique, this ancient, sun-drenched, sun-wise land of Africa."

—LAURENS VAN DER POST

*Venture to the Interior*, by Laurens van der Post

Explain the purpose of Colonel van der Post's journey.

Tell of the background which determined the state of mind and feelings he brought to this journey, with particular emphasis on the stories of his Boer grandmother and of the European father, forever alien to the African life and country about him.

Capture, if you can, Colonel van der Post's vision of the "immensely exciting physical presence" of Africa. Note his effective comparison of the drama of this apparently endless continent with the drama of the sea. Do not overlook his descriptions of the land in its more tender moments, as when in the "clear and unbelievably tender twilight" he watched the duiker doe and then the lion.

Set the immediate scene in Nyasaland for the encounter with Mlanje; describe Mlanje as the author saw the mountain's differing aspects; tell of the "very ancient, lost world of trees," and of the devoted Englishmen who served them, notably Dicky Vance in his private and intimate paradise on Chambe.

Follow the men over the monstrous peaks and through the remote unpeopled Mlanje valleys, tell of the relentless Chiperone, beat up by "the dark drummer of Africa," and of Vance's death in the fury of the waters. Is this scene of death, though quietly written, yet terrifically dramatic against the presence of Mlanje with its "quality of ill-suppressed prehistoric rage"?

Tell of the search for the Nyika, with particular reference to the natives of the region. Give examples of their friendliness, gaiety and good manners, unashamed curiosity, and of their restricted lives. Tell of the welcome to Njalowe, of the party and the dance, of the singing which had, "like all African tunes, an undertone of frustration and melancholy in it," and of the drum, which speaks the African heart. Interestingly enough, do these people, scarcely touched as yet by the problems the white man brings, remind you of Isak Dinesen's gentle Kikuyu of an earlier day? Comment.

Read from the passages describing the climb to the Nyika plateau: the place, for example, "dominated by immense scarlet aloes which raised to the sun like some Burgundian wine towards a madonna blue sky"; or the antelope, buck, and gazelle, with "their lovely, keen heads and proud delicate necks"; and the "contented, serene, and deeply-fulfilled land" to which the searchers came.

This book has much to say on the white man's role in Africa. Whether you take the story of Vance, for example, as truth or fable, do you not find it significant? Is Colonel van der Post saying, perhaps, that in this ancient land of Africa, a land today erupting with the forces of change and movement, the white man seeks a personal paradise at his eternal peril? Again, in view of the author's mystical belief in the split nature of the white man, how do you feel about the symbolism of "the true Nyika"? "It was deep in the heart of Africa," Colonel van der Post says, "and filled with the animals of Africa, and yet it was covered with the grasses, the flowers and colours of Europe . . . . It seemed a place which, without human interference, had made its own contract with life, struck its own balance with necessity and nature." Does your mind return, perhaps, to Colonel van der Post's earlier comment? "Already there is the smell of murder approaching far off in the sky over Africa. And this need not be, that is the pity of it. If we could but make friends with our inner selves, come to terms with our own darkness, then there would be no trouble from without."

*Additional Reading:*

*Flamingo Feather*, by Laurens van der Post.



## PROGRAM II

### BEAST AND BIRD

"Very proud things were about, and made their nearness felt."

—ISAK DINESEN

Isak Dinesen speaks of flying low enough over the plains of East Africa to see the animals and "to feel toward them as God did when he had just created them, and before he commissioned Adam to give them names." Such a feeling is conveyed by Ylla's photographs of the animals and birds of the great East African plains for in them she caught the pristine wonder and vigor of African animals in their homeland. The "magic of Africa," which she says does actually exist, is in the pages of her beautiful book, *Animals in Africa*.

A feeling somewhat similar to Ylla's, of "paradise regained," is evident in Gerald M. Durrell's account of a trip to collect mammals, reptiles, and birds native to the Cameroons of West Africa. In common with Ylla, Mr. Durrell has a creative appreciation of the individuality of each animal. This appreciation, combined with the scientist's exact knowledge and powers of observation and with an hilarious enjoyment of the native temperament, results, in *The Overloaded Ark*, in a thoroughly delightful and informative account of certain inhabitants of the great African forest.

Mr. Durrell's capacity to appreciate the strange should be unlimited. Born in India in 1925, he was educated in France, Italy, Switzerland and Greece. When he was twenty years of age, he spent a year as a student-keeper at Whipsnade Park Zoo in England, and his major collecting trips have been to West Africa and British Guiana.

Ylla (pronounced "eela") was the professional name of Miss Camilla Koffler (1911-1955), for many years before her death considered the finest photographer of animals in the world. Born in Vienna of a Roumanian father and a Yugoslav mother, she fled from Hungary when the Communists took over the government in 1919, and from Paris, where she had a studio, when the Germans invaded France in 1940. In the latter year, through the intercession of the Museum of Modern Art she was given a U. S. visa. She was killed by a fall from a jeep while photographing a race between bullock-drawn carts as the guest of the Maharaja of Bharatpur near New Delhi, India.

1. *In the Rain Forest*

*The Overloaded Ark*, by Gerald M. Durrell

Give an account of Mr. Durrell's arrival in the Cameroons, not omitting the lorry. Introduce his sardonic partner, John, and explain their plan of operations.

Describe the rain forest, "dim and aromatic," soft underfoot as any carpet—its trees "with their great curling buttress roots" and towering trunks, its faint twisting paths made by animals invisible by day but, by night, awake and watchful behind the black wall of the forest.

Into this forest came the native hunters, Elias and Andraia: Elias with his fat-bottomed waddle, who had the courage, and tall Andraia, mincing delicately along, who had the quick-wittedness for prompt action. Tell of their knowledge of the forest and show the hunters in action: bagging the ground python, or smoking out the pangolin, or capturing the giant water shrew. Do you agree with the publisher's blurb that calls these two daring though thoroughly natural and frightened hunters "unheroic"?

Was Mr. Durrell himself any less persistently courageous? Recall several of his personal exploits—capturing the unseen porcupine, perhaps, or falling down the rocks after the giant monitor. Read aloud a few of his exact and vivid descriptions: of the horned chameleon, of the giant plantain-eaters, of those street urchins, the drills, or of the clownish hornbills.

Explain further the methods of capture: the use of nets, smoke, and fire in taking animals; of traps or of "lubber" to capture birds. Incidentally, how does one manage a twenty-one foot python? Not overlooking the wit demanded in trade with the agile natives, explain other aspects of collecting: the difficulties of feeding, the horror of a driver ant attack, the danger of escapes, the hazards of loading specimens on board ship.

Numerous animals become characters in their own right: George, the baboon, who bullied the monkeys, befriended the red-eared guenon, and rushed off to the village dance; the baby duikers; the longed for angwantibos, those small wistful creatures found nowhere in the world except in the Cameroon forests; Chumley, the chimpanzee, who took his cup of tea and smoked a cigarette with such impeccable and friendly manners. Tell of these or of others which strike your fancy, not omitting the reptiles—notably the Gaboon viper—who found John, the bird man, so irresistible.

In a highly diverting review of this book, a critic remarked that to other visitors "the hot and dripping Cameroons might not be quite so delightful as to Zoologist Durrell," the people not so charming nor the beef so fascinating. But, he admitted, the "traveler who finds a paradise should not be cross-questioned too closely." After reading this merry and zestful account, have you any desire to cross-question? Or do you hear with the cosmopolitan Mr. Durrell a song of Africa, "a song such as the god Pan must have sung"? To each, of course, his choice.

*Additional Reading:*

*The Bafut Beagles*, by Gerald M. Durrell.

## 2. On the Plains

*Animals in Africa*. Photographed by Ylla. Text by L. S. B. Leakey.

Explain the problem of preserving wildlife in East Africa in the face of the increasing need for arable land, and describe in general a national park, noting the complete freedom of the animals, the precautions taken against disturbing them, the locomotion of the native game rangers, and the general concern of those responsible for the animals' welfare—most interesting, Major Tempel Borham and his lions.

Since this outline does not include discussion of a book on hunting with guns, tell something of the equipment and operation of a professional safari, and of the efficient service afforded by the white hunter and his natives.

Quote passages from Ylla's own story which give the feeling of strangeness and movement and color in this land. Mention the regal Lady Claud Hamilton

Are you intrigued with the personality of Ylla herself as revealed in this book, particularly her forthrightness, her humour, and her courage in the pursuit of her objective, especially considering the horrors she anticipated?

Chiefly, study the remarkable pictures in connection with the comments on the animals. With the pictures in mind and note made of the often totally surprising characteristics of the various animals—the curiosity, playfulness and lack of aggressiveness of the lions, the timidity of the hippos, the intelligence and courage of the baboons, the buffalo's cunning, the monkey's humor, the elephant's caution—consider Leakey's belief that wild animals are not really aggressive toward man, and Ylla's speculation on the possibility that these animals, in security, might forget that man is their enemy and become his friends.

Meantime, is it wise, do you think, to remember, as Ylla remarked about lions, that wild animals still "have all their teeth and, as the saying is, do not suffer fools gladly"? Or to heed Ernest Hemingway's reported reply when asked if it was true that in Africa wild animals wouldn't bother you if you carried a torch? "That depends," he said, "on how fast you carry it."

*Additional Reading:*

*African Hunt*, by Thomas S. Arbuthnot.

*Green Hills of Africa*, by Ernest Hemingway.

*Hunter*, by J. A. Hunter.

*Hunter's Choice*, by Alexander Lake.

*Leopards in the Night*, by Guy Muldoon.

*Pori Tupu*, by Oskar Koenig.



### PROGRAM III

## RELIGION AND ART

"No one can deny that the spiritual is fundamental to African life. The European may be puzzled by the supernatural aspects of African society and organization, but he cannot evade its presence and importance to the whole of society."

—GEOFFREY PARRINDER

No aspect of the native is more disconcerting to the average white man than his religious beliefs and practices. Alexander Campbell, who has lived in Africa for nearly twenty years, says that the tribal African's continued belief in things like witchcraft can coexist in his mind with complete practicality in everyday affairs. If Mr. Campbell is correct—and others who have studied the native seem to agree with him—the white man cannot dismiss the tribesman as a fantastically superstitious child, but must take into account the ancient religious convictions and fears which grip him and which more often than not continue to influence him after he has been detribalized and, not infrequently, even after he has been formally educated.

In his brief book, *African Traditional Religion*, Geoffrey Parrinder, senior lecturer in religious studies at University College in Ibadan, Nigeria, offers the reader a succinct explanation of basic religious beliefs in native Africa.

Directly related to his religious beliefs is the native's art. In *African Folktales and Sculpture*, edited by Paul Radin and James Johnson Sweeney, the latter points out that "Religion with the Negro, as with all races, has been the main stimulus to artistic expression." Ancestor worship, for example, is "the cult that in many regions of Africa has been productive of the finest sculpture." The broadest variety of expression, if not the highest, in Negro art is in the ritual mask. In the folktales, even if gods and spirits are often treated with apparent lack of respect or themselves behave without dignity, the very humour and familiarity of the approach would give evidence of the native's lively awareness and appreciation of them.

Fortunately for the reader, neither the folktales nor the sculptures are selected primarily for their religious significance. Both cover wide fields, and strange, even shocking, as some of the sculpture may appear to our uninformed eyes, some of it is very beautiful, and many of the folktales reveal an imagination,

a wit, a sense of values, and a proficiency in story telling which will no doubt come as a surprise to many readers.

1. *"This Incurably Religious People"*

*African Traditional Religion*, by Geoffrey Parrinder

Note the comparative homogeneity of African society in the religious sphere.

Emphasizing the African's belief that this world is "a spiritual arena," discuss his faith in his ritual observances "as the supreme safeguard of the basic needs of his existence and of the basic relations that make up his social order—land, cattle, rain, bodily health, the family, the clan, the state." Note the very apt representation by a triangle of the relationship between "man beneath the sky" and the spiritual powers "that share this earth with man as with their friend."

Picturing the hierarchy of society which in many parts of Africa "passes from men to kings, to ancestors, to gods, up to the Supreme God of all," discuss the importance in the native's thinking and daily life of the supreme being and of the nature gods, and, more at length, of his closeness to his unpredictable ancestors, "the ever-present, watchful dead (with) their power to smite or bless the living." Take note of the ancestors' ownership of, and power over, the family land.

Drawing on the many illuminating examples of their obligations and prerogatives, give consideration to the place of the king or chief in the religious life of many of the people. Consider the famous Rain-Queen of the Lovedu; or the Swazi king and his mother, Lion and Lady Elephant; the king in Uganda, "final source of law and leadership"; or the king of Ashanti, "sacred ruler of the sacred state." Call attention to the colorfulness and even elegance which has attended or characterized some of these rulers.

Selecting the rituals you find most interesting, show this religion in action in public and private life. Outline briefly the nature and functions of sacred specialists and of magic, sorcery, and witchcraft. Quote from the very fine descriptions of rain-making ritual in East Africa and among the Bamangwato in South Africa, and from the beautiful description of the training of a rain-maker, one of the "shepherds of heaven."

Relate some of the beliefs and practices to similar ones in other religions.

Consider in detail ideas that you find significant or apt to influence the native in his relations with white governments: ideas about death, for example, and reincarnation, or the idea that disease is not purely physical; about the basic importance of land, or the terrible consequences of change.

Do you find intriguing the belief that this is a world, light, warm, and living—to appreciate and enjoy? Does this belief take your mind back with pleasure to the natives who so enchanted Isak Dinesen, Laurens van der Post, and Gerald Durrell, in such widely scattered sections of Africa as Kenya, Nyasaland, and the Cameroons? Does it

throw light, too, on the fascination of the continent for almost all who have travelled there?

## 2. "A Self-Consistent Creation"

*African Folktales and Sculpture.* Folktales selected and edited by Paul Radin with the collaboration of Elinore Marvel. Introduction to the tales by Paul Radin. Sculpture selected with an introduction by James Johnson Sweeney.

Explaining the distribution in Africa of true Negroes, Negro-Hamite mixtures, and non-Negro peoples, point out the prevalence of the folktale and the limits of the great sculpture area.

Sum up the material you find most interesting about cultural features shared by the true Negroes, the culture of the tribes of West Africa, the Hamitic influence in East Africa, the diversity of the Bantu, and the marked peculiarities of the non-Negro Bushmen and Hottentots.

Quote from the preface the statement as to the intention of the editors to correct the widely current erroneous impression relative to native African folk-literature; call attention to Mr. Radin's statement that these tales, which were created by an enslaved race and transmitted orally, are of an artistic distinction which can be equated in many respects with our own folktales; and discuss briefly the specific nature of this oral literature—the similarities in types of plot-construction, subject matter and literary devices, the stark realism, geocentrism and lack of sentimentality and wish-fulfillment—and, most interesting, the relation of the themes to the insecure world in which the native has lived. Note evidence in some of the stories of the native's strong resistance to personal and cultural disintegration.

With the above in mind, read and discuss some of the tales. Point out any moral the story may carry and anything which reminds you of tales in the folklore of this country, most obvious, of course, the treatment of animals.

Relate the brief history of the white man's contact with native sculpture, with note of the manner in which the finest pieces were torn from their original rich legendary and religious settings and scattered over Europe, the resort to forgeries to meet a demand, and the deterioration of native art following the exploitation of the natives by the whites.

In showing the plates, quote Mr. Sweeney's description of African art as a self-consistent creation to be studied and enjoyed as such and not as an adopted child of European art, and his summary of the sculptural quality of this art. Point out examples of the influence of religion, the artist's attention to even the commonest accessories of life, and the different materials used which to the native artist "are never inert." In contrast to sculpture less easily appreciated by the uninitiated, direct attention to the very beautiful examples of the Benin and Ife bronzes and the terra-cotta heads from Ife and Nok, Nigeria.

### *Additional Reading:*

*Africa Dances*, by Geoffrey Gorer.

*African Art*, by Werner Schmalenbach.



## PROGRAM IV

### TRIBAL AFRICA

In *Green Hills of Africa* Ernest Hemingway says that just as the native words "came to seem the proper and natural words" and "there was nothing unseemly in the stretching of the ears . . . or in a man carrying a spear," so the "tribal marks and the tattooed places seemed natural and handsome adornments and I regretted not having any of my own." While not many would share Mr. Hemingway's regret, close contact with native life has in frequent instances bred respect and a conviction that the white man ignores the values in indigenous African culture only through his own ignorance.

Two interesting books about the customs and beliefs of African tribes sustain this point of view: *Africa Drums*, by an Englishman, Captain Richard St. Barbe Baker, formerly for long years in the forestry service in Central Africa; and *Madami*, by Anne Eisner Putnam, an American who married a scientist and went with him to his home near the pigmies in the Ituri forest of Equatorial Africa.

#### 1. "Heart Beat of a People"

*Africa Drums*, by Richard St. Barbe Baker

Tell something of Captain Baker and the nature of his work, and of his character as it is revealed in this book, notably, his tact and ingenuity and his respect for all living things.

This Englishman, out of intimate association with Africa and Africans, has his own individual conception of the native's past. Picture this past.

Tell in brief several of the folk tales which best reveal the native mentality and background. The story of Munyi's dream of the coming of the Pink Cheeks, and that of the peaceful revolution which brought to an end the Golden Age of Kikuyu kings, are significant in view of the past inclination of the native in eastern Africa to trust the English above all other nations and of the recent tragic Kikuyu revolt in Kenya. Note again the kinship of our Uncle Remus stories to the clever animal stories told, this time, by Swahili sailors.

Discuss the significance of trees and the dance in native life, and give examples of native characteristics and temperament as revealed to Captain Baker in his pursuit of forest protection and tree planting.

Rather poetically Captain Baker says, "The rhythmic drums are ever talking, in mystic language more subtle than speech." Discuss the function of these drums and give examples of what the author means when he speaks of "the ancient folkways of television."

The forest of Nigeria is "the last best forest of Africa." Describe this forest and tell something of the means of transport and the excitements of trekking through it, and of the expert native craftsmen in the mahogany industry.

Captain Baker observed closely the workings of magic ju-ju in Nigeria and in the weird city of Benin. Give examples of practices and beliefs and tell something of the Oba, of the Amofi ceremony, and of the symbolic Feast of the Yams.

After reading this book, are you inclined to agree with its author that a sympathetic evaluation of native tradition and culture is essential to the solution of problems in Africa today? Do you go along with him on the lack of a short cut to knowledge of a people so far removed in time and custom, yet at the same time as human as ourselves in their joys and sorrows, their hopes and fears?

*Additional Reading:*

*African Glory: The Story of Vanishing Negro Civilizations*, by J. C. deGraft-Johnson.

*Sudan Days and Ways*, by H. C. Jackson. (This is a most interesting companion piece to *Africa Drums* in its revelation of native life and of the character and methods of early English officials in Africa.)

## 2. Putnam's Pigmies

*Madami: My Eight Years of Adventure with the Congo Pigmies*, by Anne Eisner Putnam, with Allan Keller

Locate the scene of this book, describe the make-up and functions of Camp Putnam, and tell of Mr. Putnam's relationship with and service to the pigmies.

Tell of Mrs. Putnam's arrival among the little people and of how close she was to them, living on occasion in their villages and sharing their lives, even caring for William, Jr., symbol of their trust.

Describe the pigmies and their mode of life: physical characteristics, villages, food and clothing (note Mrs. Putnam's comments on nudity); family life and affection; methods of fishing and hunting, the latter reaching an unbelievable climax in the story of Faizi and the elephant; facility with the message drums; joy in palm wine and arak; burial customs, victory dances and other ceremonies.

Discuss pigmy traits of character and beliefs. Note their friendly though reserved temperament, essential modesty and good manners, industry and inventiveness, amazing courage in their unpredictable and savage African forest, ideas of justice and rather amusing attitude toward stealing, and their feeling about "real people" and arrangement with their "Negro masters."

Tell of the little philosopher, Herafu, an almost perfect example of the qualities of mind and heart the Putnams admired in the pigmies.

In contrast to more easily understood qualities, recall the ancient savage passion of the pigmies' victory dance, their belief in the Esamba and the Bolozi, their attitude toward adultery and toward the Alima, etc.

The birth of Tima's baby is a fine illustration of the conflict in these barbaric little men and women between a growing faith in civilized medical procedures and their age-old self-reliance and faith in superstitions and methods which seem to us bizarre, to say the least. Tell of this birth.

Strange as the pigmies and their manner of living may appear to us, do you find yourself sympathetic to the Putnams' affection for them? Do they emerge from the pages of this book a people "real, genuine and gracious," a people blessed with "the secret art of living together happily," to whom the advantages of civilization might not prove wholly a blessing? Comment.

## PROGRAM V

### BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Elenore Smith Bowen's *Return to Laughter* and Esther Warner's *Seven Days to Lomoland* do much to illuminate further the scene in Africa where it becomes every day more imperative for men to adjust peaceably a society in which two cultures, each foreign to the other, are at war. Miss Bowen is an American born anthropologist who lived for twenty-six months with a tribe in the West African bush. In *Return to Laughter*, a fictional account of her experiences, she dramatizes her reactions to this foreign culture in which, to her dismay, she found herself emotionally and tragically immersed. Writing with humour and surprising narrative skill, she gives a rich and varied account of the life of African bush dwellers.

Esther Warner, an American sculptor and writer, journeyed originally to Liberia to satisfy a curiosity dating from her childhood. In *Seven Days to Lomoland*, she does not, as Miss Bowen does, attempt to penetrate secrets of personality and ritual, but out of affection and comprehension she writes of the native's plight, faced as he is with two conflicting worlds.

#### 1. *White Ways Or Tribe Ways*

*Seven Days to Lomoland*, by Esther Warner

Tell the story of Miss Warner's experience, explaining traits of character and temperament, and customs and beliefs, which dictated native action. Comment on the astuteness of these natives in their realization that with knowledge of the situation this white woman could be brought to understand Comma's behavior.

Give attention to the unquestioning respect of these natives for the Poro and belief in trial by ordeal, and explain Miss Warner's reaction to the apparent justification of their faith in the case of Comma. (Captain Baker, also, witnessed an ordeal which apparently justified faith.)

Gather together additional material which interests you, such as: amusing incidents like that of the snake loaned for purposes of hospitality; ingratiating scenes such as the welcome to Boitai; folk sayings; forest terrors; and, most amusing in its penetration, a black man's picture of the white man in Africa.

Miss Warner points out it is *persons* who count most. Picture some of her people: Johnny, merry, impudent, but faithful and surprisingly wise; frisky, lovable Tama; dependable Zabogi; Baysah, all eaten up with the white people's wants; the really magnificent Bola; and Comma, lost between two worlds until the Poro and a chimpanzee settled his fate—to work for the time when “a boy won't have to decide for one or



the other, white ways or tribe ways" but will know "a Loma can be both."

*Additional Reading:*

*The Dark Child*, by Camara Laye.

*New Song in a Strange Land*, by Esther Warner.

2. *Dilemma*

*Return to Laughter*, by Elenore Smith Bowen

Tell the story of Miss Bowen's coming to Chief Kako's homestead with her evening dresses, her English trained servants, and her sublime faith in her ability to participate objectively in the native culture without damage to her own values.

Describe the tribal community of homesteads which comprised Miss Bowen's orbit; trace the course of her gradual involvement in the life of Kako's tribe; and discuss some of the men and women in whom she became interested: Atakpa, Ticha, Udama, Poorgbilin, Ikpoom, Ihugh, Accident, and those two masters of guile, Yabo, who reveled in his sins, and Kako, who never let his conscience get out of control.

Tell of the effective, yet at the same time almost incidental, place of women in this society. Note the importance of family and children, the advantages to "great wife," "little wives," and husband, in this self-sufficient society, of the co-wife system (don't miss Ava and her wives), and the attitude—certainly sensible considering the facts—of even the most severe elder disciplinarian to the question of adultery.

Describe the simplicity of the actual physical lives of these people, determined by season and weather, and discuss tribal mores and beliefs—many of them far from simple—which interest you most. Note the very involved relationships and loyalties, the dual aspect of kinship, the respect for public opinion, the authority of the elders, and the concentration of law, politics, and magic in the hands of the men.

Belief in witchcraft, a determining factor in the lives of these people, is one for the reader to ponder: its source in hate, its fast hold on the native, the psychic nature of its practice, the irrelevance of physical evidence of performance. Discuss the situation in Kako's tribe as it was finally revealed to Miss Bowen, and tell of the fearful culmination in Amara's death. Do you think the belief that the witch feasts on human flesh may account for the report of the survival of cannibalism among primitive tribes?

Relate briefly the story of the smallpox epidemic, of Miss Bowen's flight and return, and of the evening of storytelling.

Pose Miss Bowen's dilemma—whether or not to give up her principles, deny her own culture, and beg the liking of these people, so many of whom she came to like or respect but whose basic reactions to the same basic situation were not indeed the same as hers. In their contact with white culture, are the "savages" no doubt confronted with the same problem? Have they perhaps discovered, as did Miss Bowen, that "It is an error to assume that to know is to understand and that to understand is to like"? Is it possible, perhaps, that in the case of the

great majority of natives the white man is proceeding on a false assumption that to know the white civilization, even to understand it, is to like it? Will the natives perhaps prefer "each man his own integrity"?

### The Scene Today

*The recognition of the equal humanity of the native African by Europeans of the Western world comes slowly, too slowly. The existing domination of these peoples and their memory of the past treatment keep discontent alive and burning. It is likely to make Africa within the next generation another arena of battles between blind or fostered insurrection and guided, understanding, democratic development.*

—GEORGE EDMUND HAYNES

## PROGRAM VI

### THE WHITE MAN COMES TO AFRICA

Two unusual books offer a background to today's struggle for power and wealth in sub-Sahara Africa.

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* may be said to summarize the white man's arrival in Africa. In it he tells a story of the Europeans who in modern times invaded the ivory coast for purposes of trade, and whose ethics were far from humanitarian. Conrad (1857-1924) himself in his young manhood went to Africa as a river boat captain, and character and incident in *Heart of Darkness* were drawn directly from this experience.

In *The World of Albert Schweitzer*, very beautiful photographs by Erica Anderson tell in terms of human beings the brilliant and moving story of Dr. Schweitzer's life, notably of his compassionate services to the natives of French Equatorial Africa.

#### 1. "Hints for Nightmares"

"Heart of Darkness," in Joseph Conrad's *Tales of Land and Sea*

Tell of Marlowe's coming to Africa, and of the white men he met there.

Follow his trip from the coast to the Central Station and picture, as he observed it, the "imbecile rapacity" of the traders and their chilling brutality to the Negroes—while around them lay the silent wilderness, "waiting patiently for the passing away of this fantastic invasion."

Read from the masterly passages descriptive of the trip up the river "into the heart of darkness."

Most terrible of the white traders was the man Kurtz. Discuss the impact of Africa on this man who hid "in the magnificent folds of eloquence the barren darkness of his heart." Do you marvel at the art with which Conrad makes of this man the epitome of the greed and cruelty of the white man in Africa, of the response of brutal instincts and monstrous passions to the powers of darkness, and of the ultimate futility in this land "so pitiless to human weakness" of even the strongest human will?

Indeed, does Conrad here recreate for you this land as the first white men must have found it? A land mysterious and impenetrable, its concealed life breaking suddenly into "wild and passionate uproar"; its people, howling, leaping black men who though incomprehensible in their frenzy yet worried Marlowe with the "suspicion of their not being inhuman." Reading from passages descriptive of these people, discuss some of them: the cannibals with their glittering eyes; Kurtz's "niggers" in their desperate grief; and the "wild and gorgeous apparition" of the woman on the shore, image, perhaps, of the whole sorrowful land's "own tenebrous and passionate soul."

2. *A Man of Mercy*

*The World of Albert Schweitzer: A Book of Photographs* by Erica Anderson. Text and captions by Eugene Exman.

Give a résumé of Dr. Schweitzer's life and explain the nature of the convictions which led him to devote his talents to the service of humanity.

In studying the pictures which were taken in Africa, note how deeply moving they are, not alone in the selfless dedication of Dr. Schweitzer and his staff, but in their revelation of simple humanity of soul in black and white alike.

*Additional Reading:*

*The Africa of Albert Schweitzer*, by Charles R. Joy and Arnold Melvin.

*Albert Schweitzer: An Anthology*, compiled by Charles R. Joy.

*My Patients Were Zulus*, by James B. McCord and John Scott Douglas.

*On the Edge of the Primeval Forest and More From the Primeval Forest*, by Albert Schweitzer.

## PROGRAM VII

### WHITE MAN'S QUANDARY

In *Struggle for Africa* Vernon Bartlett has written for the lay reader a simple, straightforward account of conditions in those countries in Africa which he considers likely to have some influence on the future of the continent. He does not fear to draw a conclusion which, though abhorrent to many white Africans, would yet appear to be the obvious and sane solution to the problems of a continent on whose future many think depends the future of the world. Although the status of several of the countries in relation to European powers has changed somewhat since the book was published, Mr. Bartlett indicates so clearly the probability of such changes that they should come as no surprise.

The problem of race in sub-Sahara Africa, a problem which currently transcends all others, is cogently discussed in *Africa: The Racial Issue*, a collection of essays edited by Joan Coyne MacLean. Written for various publications in this country and England, these essays speak with clarity and without rancor of the causes and possible cures of a situation which becomes each day more explosive.

#### 1. *Problems of a Plural Society*

*Struggle for Africa*, by Vernon Bartlett

Trace in general the known history of Africa. Note the probable physical characteristics and pursuits of the original inhabitants. Tell of the two main forces, the pastoralists and warriors and the primitive agriculturists, who pushed these original inhabitants farther and farther south, to be met themselves by the white man pushing north from the coast.

Discuss the continent's size, topography, and immense wealth; and explain, with the aid of a good map, the division of the continent among the nations of Europe.

Pose in brief the problem of the dominant white, complicated by the presence of the thrifty Indian; point out what in the opinion of many white men the peculiarities of the native are; and, noting the points Mr. Bartlett makes in defense of the native, discuss some of the good and bad effects of the white man's presence on the health, economy, and tribal discipline of the black man. Include the explanation of the increase in native population and the decrease in arable land. Tell of the deplorable effect of the white man's failure to dignify manual labor, particularly in the Union of South Africa.

Select for discussion those countries in Africa which best exemplify the differing policies of the various European nations or local govern-



ments in their treatment of the natives: the Union of South Africa, for instance, intent on its policy of "apartheid"; the Africans' Brave New World, the Belgian Congo, example of the firm hand of direct control (Cookson's discussion of the Congo is particularly informative); Nigeria and the Gold Coast, or the Sudan, typical of the British technique of education for autonomy; French Africa with its technique of assimilation; Tanganyika, "the one country in which the problem of a plural society is being deliberately faced," and Kenya, where it is not.

Considering the African's need of capital and technical assistance, and the world's need of Africa's products, do you agree with Mr. Bartlett that we must make partnership a reality? Comment.

*Special Reference:*

*Before the African Storm*, by John Cookson.

*Additional Reading:*

*The African Awakening*, by Basil Davidson.

*Introducing Africa*, by Carveth Wells.

*Report on Africa*, by Oden Meeker.

Magazine: *Life*, issue of May 4, 1953, devoted to "An Exciting 10,000 Mile Trip Through Africa: A Continent in Ferment"

## 2. And What Do the Africans Want?

"And what do the Africans want from us? Justice, and to be treated as men. Maybe not as equals but still as men."

—STUART CLOETE

*Africa: The Racial Issue*, edited by Joan Coyne MacLean

Give a running summary of the several articles which interest you most. Attention is directed to the following: "Continent of the Future," by George Edmund Haynes, an excellent summary of the most pressing problems of Africans today; "Is the Gospel Too Subversive for Africa?" by Darrell Randall, which poses the dilemma faced by white Christians in Africa; "The Task of the Educator in Africa," by W. E. F. Ward, a plea for education aimed at developing the African to his highest possibility; "The Mau Mau: An African's View," by Gikonyo Wa Kiano, and "Behind the Blood Oath of the Mau Mau," by L. S. B. Leakey, both of which point out the urgent need for correction of past mistakes in dealing with the natives in Kenya and frank recognition of his rights in the present; Stuart Cloete's "I Speak for the African," a "peep hole the size of a pin prick," he says, into the soul of his country's black people; and "French in Africa Assimilate Negro," by Michael Clark, a rather optimistic report on integration in French West Africa.

*Additional Reading:*

*Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Kikuyu*, by Jomo Kenyatta.

*Mau Mau and the Kikuyu*, by L. S. B. Leakey

Magazine: *The Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science*, issue of March 1955, devoted to "Contemporary Africa: Trends and Issues"

## PROGRAM VIII

### TWO POINTS OF VIEW

"But the day the virile black man and the virile white man came face to face there began a struggle in South Africa that is not yet ended and whose end none knows."

—SARAH GERTRUDE MILLIN

Vernon Bartlett, you recall, thinks it is not alone the white man's obligation but in all common sense to his interest to grant partnership to the African in his own land. Sarah Gertrude Millin's book, *The People of South Africa*, is a brilliant, even a seductive argument for the white man's right to his well-earned heritage in Africa. If the world is to be saved, she believes this heritage must be preserved. Mrs. Millin's facts are usually unimpeachable, her style of writing is subtle, passionate, and witty, and her ideas are highly provocative, especially when applied to the South African Union which she credits with five-sixths of the entire white population of Africa, and in which she was herself born, bred, and educated. A Foreign Policy Association pamphlet on South Africa by Gwendolen M. Carter contains material valuable to a fuller understanding of Mrs. Millin's book.

At sharp issue with the opinions of both Mr. Bartlett and Mrs. Millin is that of Richard Wright, the American born Negro writer who now lives in Paris. After a three months study of conditions as he found them in the Gold Coast, where under the tutelage of the English the Negroes are aiming towards self-government, Mr. Wright is convinced that the African Negroes must themselves work out their salvation without reliance on the West. His conclusions are given in *Black Power*, a subjective and passionately partisan report of what he saw and felt.

#### 1. *White Man's Heritage*

"For South Africa is surely the white people's heritage. The black people laboured with their hands, that is true. But ownership is to the deviser, not to the means of the fulfillment of his device."

—SARAH GERTRUDE MILLIN

*The People of South Africa*, by Sarah Gertrude Millin

Reconstruct briefly the story of South Africa, where black fought black, and white white, and each fought the other. Note the birth of the new South Africa with the discovery of diamonds and gold, and the electric impulse given to the region as the result of World War II.

Discuss the nature of the native leaders who made history in this country: Dingiswayo, ablest of the Zulu monarchs; Chaka, whose wars



reduced men to cannibals; the vain Mantatisi; Dingaan, who taught white people a lesson. This killing that lost the Africans of South Africa their strength makes a bloody background for Mrs. Millin's argument for white supremacy. Do you sense an inherent weakness in the omission in this book of reference to native leaders of today whom newsmen like Alexander Campbell find so well worth a hearing?

Picture the drama of the diamond mines from the days of the individual digger to those of De Beers Consolidated Mines. Include discussion of the native's part in this development, beginning with those law-abiding and honest natives whom Mrs. Millin calls "derelicts of a vanishing world."

Tell of some of the white leaders this country has produced or nurtured in government, finance, and industry—amazing men, many of them, in their dreams, their courage, their abilities, even, sometimes, in their obstinacy: Rhodes, Kruger, Smuts, Hofmeyr, Malan.

List the nationalities that make up the population of the Union today and comment on the difficulties of nomenclature.

Sum up the material which interests you most about each group:

The Afrikaners whose character was molded by the physical characteristics of the country and the presence of the kaffir—the Afrikaners whose meanest "poor white" is today "sheltered under the banner of the white man's pride."

The English, whose dilemma it is in this country that the conquered became the conquerors.

The Jews—but for Rhodes, the creators, Mrs. Millin says, of modern South Africa—whose problem it is that they do not stay down.

The Indians, in the beginning imported by English sugar planters in Natal, whom nothing now will induce to return to India from this country where their great leader, Gandhi, first used the weapon of Passive Resistance, and in whom the white man sees always reflected the threat of the teeming millions of India.

The Coloureds, with whom it is as if the darkness of their skins descends also upon their souls when those souls confront the white man.

The Africans, who in their millions are today "the charges, the servants, the dependants, the victims, the problems, the danger of the white man."

The book comes to a conclusion in a cogent summary and discussion of the insoluble problems of a South Africa whose prosperity Mrs. Millin says—indeed, whose "civilized existence"—depends on cheap black labour. South Africa's choice, in the author's opinion, might well be one between humane treatment of the natives in their millions and loss of white mastery. Referring to her opinion that from the beginning Europeans should have been encouraged to pour into Africa as they poured into America, quote from Mrs. Millin's discussion of the position today of the black man in his native land, and of the unanswered questions which plague the white man now that the "black man has been started on the road and will not go back."

*Special Reference:*

*South Africa*, by Gwendolen M. Carter.

*Additional Reading:*

*The Choice Before South Africa*, by E. S. Sachs. (Labour's case.)

*The South African Way of Life: Values and Ideals of a Multiracial Society*, edited by G. H. Calpin.

*Through Malan's Africa*, by Robert St. John.

## 2. *Black Man's Land*

"Nkrumah had had no legal right to the land in which he had been born; he had pled that since his people had been living for centuries on that land, they had the right to rule it."

*Black Power*, by Richard Wright

Point out the author's personal bias and point of view.

Explain briefly the division of government between the English and the natives, and tell something of the economy of the Gold Coast and of its chief cities, notably Accra, Kumasi, and Bibiana.

The author suggests that Nkrumah may be no more than an *agent provocateur* to the emotions of millions. Tell the story of Nkrumah and give examples of the combined use of tribal customs and western methods which is his political technique.

Explain the attitude in opposition to Nkrumah of educated natives such as Dr. Ampofo and Dr. Danquah. Do you think the British for their own interests are playing a game with Nkrumah and his followers, or do you think in releasing him from prison to become prime minister they were taking another honest step toward eventual dominion status for the Gold Coast?

The idea is commonly accepted that the white man has broken down the old way of life in Africa without admitting the native to the white way or supplying him with a new way. Describe the life today of the "vital and earthy people" of the Gold Coast, a life, incidentally, which in most of its manifestations appalled Mr. Wright.

Discuss native customs, beliefs and celebrations, particularly funerals, which so amazed and puzzled Mr. Wright. Note evidence of the survival of slavery and even perhaps of human sacrifice.

Give attention to the place of women in Gold Coast life, and to the entertaining activities of the "mammies." (Women are now demanding seats in the Legislative Assembly. The first one elected, Mabel Dove, announced she would work for water supplies, dispensaries, clinics, roads, and other elementary needs for women, and for reform of marriage laws.)

Mr. Wright feels that from the days of the slave trader, the white man, and particularly the British today, have kept the Gold Coast a captive nation. Discuss the means by which he thinks this has been done—for example, by intimidation of the native's pride in himself and his culture.

Tell of some of the obstacles in the path of progress, such as tribal customs which discourage steady employment, eating habits, opposition

of the chiefs, the general belief in ju-ju, suspicion of the white man—a suspicion shared by Mr. Wright and extending even to an effort such as the Volta project.

Disagreeing with the idea prevalent among so many white people that chaos alone follows breakdown of tribal authority, Mr. Wright thinks that the problem here is one of taking the people from their ancestral moorings and affording them contented lives in a rational industrial order. Explain this idea of solution through a “militarized” African society which will “project the African immediately into the twentieth century!” Does this suggestion startle you with its lack of all regard for the individual? Comment.

*Additional Reading:*

*Africa, Land of My Fathers*, by Era Bell Thompson.

*The Gold Coast Revolution*, by George Padmore.

## PROGRAM IX

### AN INTEGRAL PART OF MANKIND

Currently head of the Time-Life bureau in Johannesburg, Alexander Campbell has lived in Africa since 1937 and has taken advantage of wide travel to observe and study the life and problems of the various countries and peoples. His report, *The Heart of Africa*, published in 1954, is an eloquent survey of conditions, presented in large part in terms of the attitudes and reactions of actual people. Witty and at times hilarious, the book has a passionately serious purpose—to show the urgent need of sane remedial action in the relation of the races. Telling points are economically made and conclusions are informed with reason and good will. Because it so expertly and excitingly covers the ground, *The Heart of Africa* alone is suggested for reading in this chapter.

*The Heart of Africa*, by Alexander Campbell

Review briefly the four outstanding attempts by approximately 3,000,000 whites to govern some 131,000,000 blacks: (1) Give them a boost and set them free—the Gold Coast and Nigeria, for example; (2) Give them economic prosperity but no political rights—the Belgian Congo; (3) Remove the color bar and give them political rights in return for services and taxes—French Equatorial Africa; (4) Deny them all rights—South Africa.

Drawing on the wealth of incident, example, and conversation, picture relations in typical countries between the races (including the Indian) and particularly the generally prevailing attitude of the ordinary white man toward the Negro, regardless of officially stated racial policy. Contrast the injustice, murder and hate in such countries as South Africa and Kenya, with the wonderful good humor of scene and character Mr. Campbell observed in some of the more fortunate countries, notably the uninhibited Gold Coast. Incidentally, does this report of the Gold Coast mitigate somewhat Richard Wright's shockingly dour report in *Black Power*?

Through pen portraits, interviews, and comment, Mr. Campbell reports on leaders of all shades of color and opinion. Picture some of these men from each group and discuss their aims and those of men in opposition to them. Note those who may be in the news at the time of your report.

Explaining further, in the words of their leaders, just what the Negroes want, discuss the varying opinions held by white people as to the root of the trouble—land, natural "inferiority" of the Negro, "pushing the African on too fast," lack of a democratic spirit, etc. With which of these opinions, if any, do you agree? Read from Mr. Campbell's own compelling conclusions as he sums them up in the final chapter.

Do you agree with Mr. Campbell that though a great question mark still hangs over their future, Africa's "great-hearted, black-skinned peoples" cannot go back "but must press forward, an integral part of mankind"?

*Additional Reading:*

*Cairo to Capetown: A Pilgrimage in Search of Hope*, by Reginald Reynolds.

### Africans All

*Africa is broader than the measure of most men's minds and cannot possibly be fully comprehended in words.*

—GEORGE H. T. KIMBLE

*If we are to live with quickened sympathies and with live interest in the world, we constantly need to be reminded that all of this with which we are dealing relates, in the last analysis, to men and women, to human beings.*

—JAMES T. FARRELL



## PROGRAM X

### SETTLERS

Published in 1883, *The Story of An African Farm* was the first notable work of fiction to come out of the white man's Africa. Nearly fifty years later, in 1926, Francis Brett Young wrote in an introduction to the Modern Library edition that it was a "clumsy book, a crude book, a book that is full of striking incongruities and immaturities; and yet a book that bears on every page the imprint of a great spirit, the incontestable stamp of genius. . . . It must remain for us, and for many generations to come the type and example of an imperfect masterpiece perfect of its kind." He has proved a true prophet.

Born in Basutoland of a German missionary father and an English mother, Olive Schreiner (1862-1920) wrote of a life she knew and understood, that of the farmers on the plateau of the Great Karroo in the years before the discovery of gold. Like the life and people it pictures, the novel is unique, to be read not the less for an impression of a way of life than for the passion and beauty which inform its pages.

Though not to the same degree, passion and beauty inform also the pages of David Divine's current novel, *The Golden Fool*. Set in the High Veld of the Transvaal after the Great Trek of the Boers (1835-1840) and before the great gold discovery, this novel depicts unforgettably the character of the Afrikaner, Lemaire, who, with others of his kind, left the Cape to create in defiance of the English their own republics.

Mr. Divine is himself an Englishman, a newspaper man who as a roving reporter has travelled across Europe, Africa and the East. An earlier novel about the Lemaires, *Wine of Good Hope*, was published several years ago under the pseudonym of David Rame.

#### 1. Knowledge of Loneliness

*The Story of An African Farm*, by Olive Schreiner

Set the scene of this novel and tell the simple but moving story.

Describe the circumscribed life these farm people lived and tell of some of their customs, of worship, courtship, and marriage, for example.

The types portrayed are various and the study of them is penetrating. Describe some of them and discuss their characteristics as exemplified in their lives and actions: Uncle Otto, touching in his innocence and kindness, and probably a study of the author's own father; the shallow,

greedy Boer woman, said to have been suggested by one of the author's employers when she worked as governess; the English child, little Em, in Lyndall's words destined always to be the "accompaniment of a song," filling the gaps in other people's lives and always "number two"; that terrible man, Bonaparte Blenkins; and, at the heart of the book, Waldo and Lyndall, vivid and unbearably moving.

Read from passages explanatory of the convictions and longings of Waldo and Lyndall and of the furies that drove the latter. Though the close spiritual relationship of this uncouth boy and this dainty girl may seem incongruous, in the eloquence of Olive Schreiner's pen do you ever for a moment doubt the relationship? Discuss.

What is it that makes this book so engrossing? Is it the quiet but passionate style? The author's intensity of recollection? The compelling bleakness and beauty of background? Is it the perceptive portrayal of the tenderness and the cruelty of human relationships? The fascination of people of such loneliness and dedication as Waldo, such goodness as Em, such fiery depth as Lyndall? Is it Olive Schreiner's understanding of the spiritual and moral terrors of the life she portrays? Her compassion for those for whom death was the only escape?

## 2. *The Afrikaner*

"We are a sober people and a simple people, walking as closely as we know in the ways of God because under this sky there is only God and the land and ourselves."

—LEMAIRE

*The Golden Fool*, by David Divine

Early in this book the Afrikaner, Lemaire, ponders on the peace and security of the life of his people, a peace threatened only by the openness and emptiness of the land, "a quiet hostility of nature that the spirit could fight against in a slow and easy satisfaction of the senses." Set the scene of the novel and tell of "the delectable life" the Boers led in simplicity, isolation and practically complete self-dependence, lacking only gunpowder and lead, coffee and tobacco, their only constant visitor the Jew, their only gathering the Nagmaal.

Picture the Lemaire family in the satisfaction of their lives, and tell in brief the story of Stopford's secret and the tragedy which attended it.

Discuss the Boer character and convictions as evidenced in the men and women in this book, notably their almost sacred belief in their way of life and in themselves as a people whom the Lord had specially chosen, their distrust of one not of their own race, their cruel rectitude. In contrast to stubbornness, prejudice, and self-righteousness, place their self-reliance, their independence, their courage and persistence in battle against the menaces of nature, their fierce determination to hold uncontaminated their clean sweet land, their land of hard slow work geared to the pace of the patient ox.

The heart of the novel is the very fine characterization of Lemaire. Discuss this man, who, though a Boer, would give his daughter to the Englishman, would kill the son he loved, would die to preserve even



for one generation the life he believed in. Discuss his background and ancestry, his reasons for leaving the Cape, what he believed, what he loved, what he feared; his fatalism, his doleful humor, his quick perception, his wisdom, above all his steadfastness in principles he himself described to his son as "greater than blood." Stopford came to feel that "in the subtleties of the man's simplicity there was something above and beyond the ordinary statue of man." Do you feel so? Do you feel that in Lemaire Mr. Divine brings to fruition the finest qualities of the Boer character?

Presenting as he does so many facets of the Boer character, does Mr. Divine contribute in this novel to your understanding of the fires burning so fiercely in the Union of South Africa today? Would this book support the opinion of those who say that behind their shield of racial pride and racial hatred the Boers are a people of many fine qualities, a people not to be judged too lightly nor condemned too quickly for inherited qualities now put to an acid test? Comment.

*Additional Reading:*

*Tales of the African Frontier*, by J. A. Hunter and Daniel P. Mannix.

*The Turning Wheels*, by Stuart Cloete.

*The Year of the Lion*, by Gerald Hanley.

## PROGRAM XI

### "RACE"

And judgment is turned away backward,  
and justice standeth afar off:  
for truth is fallen in the street,  
and equity cannot enter.

—ISAIAH

This verse from Isaiah Peter Abrahams, a South African "Coloured," quotes at the beginning of *Tell Freedom*, in which he recalls memories of his first twenty-two years of life in South Africa. The verse could well be given voice by all men who have suffered from racial prejudice.

Although *Tell Freedom* is autobiography, it has the dramatic and poetic impact of good fiction. Born in the black slums of Johannesburg and reared under the weight of South African racial hatred, Peter Abrahams yet discovered early in his life the beauties of fine literature. While he gives expression in *Tell Freedom* to his personal bitterness and anger, he is an intelligent writer who knows the value of restraint.

Mr. Abrahams speaks for the Coloureds and their brothers, the Blacks. Albert Segal writes of the Jews. His novel, *Johannesburg Friday*, is on the surface a quietly written account of one day in the life of a Jewish family living in Johannesburg. An earnest book, it is concerned primarily with the Jewish culture and its tenacious hold on the Jews of Johannesburg, but running like a strong current through it is the theme of racial conflict between Jew and Gentile, black and white. Though the terror of the conflict seldom boils to the surface—and only then by implication, since Mr. Segal's manner of writing is as undramatic as his theme is explosive—the thoughtful study of racial distrust and hatred gives valuable contemporary significance to the book. Mr. Segal was born and bred in Johannesburg where he is now in business. *Johannesburg Friday* is his first published novel.

#### 1. *The Submerged*

"Barbarians might become Hellenised but there is no appeal from a judgment determined by skin color."

—SHEILA PATTERSON

*Tell Freedom: Memories of Africa*, by Peter Abrahams

Tell the story of the very young Peter, his birth in Vrededorp, his life at Elsburg location with Aunt Liza and Uncle Sam, his introduction to racial arrogance, his return to the slums of Johannesburg.

Discuss from Peter's point of view some of the problems which confronted him: problems first of survival—a place to live, food, cleanliness, recreation; problems, later, of a livelihood, of the search for knowledge and beauty, of the enigma of Christian teaching and behavior, of Communist hatred.

Always, for Peter and his friends, there was the problem of self-respect in a white world. Cite examples of the thoughtless small acts of white insult and needless brutality with which the author illuminates the scene, and of the ever present uneasy uncertainty in which the Coloureds and the Blacks lived (for example, the anxiety of Peter's mother and sister as to his future as an educated Coloured and writer).

Peter found his way with the assistance of men and women of good will, both white and black. Tell of some of these people, simple citizens, churchmen, social workers, Boy Scouters, Marxists, trade unionists.

Describe Peter's last months in Africa, the fight in Cape Town against the Hertzog bill (a fight neither side has yet won), conditions at Cape Flats, and his last determined, and successful, effort to escape, as he conceived it, to a climate of freedom in England, "a peaceful land that offered peace to a poet."

Taut with rebellion, this book is leavened with the recognition of goodness and kindness wherever Peter found it. Are you shocked into awareness by *Tell Freedom* more than by books written by American-born Negroes about this country, *Black Boy* by Richard Wright, for example?

*Additional Reading:*

*Mine Boy*, by Peter Abrahams.

## 2. *An Alien World*

*Johannesburg Friday*, by Albert Segal

Mr. Segal begins this book with the characterization of the Jewish mother, Mrs. Leventhal, whose placid life is contained within the four walls of her house and against whose innocence and consequent unconcern the tensions in the novel develop. Tell of her, her dreams, her sense of the duties and rewards of motherhood, her undoubted futility if she were faced with the problems with which her children are struggling.

Tell the stories of the other three Leventhals: the father, Max, torn between the traditional ambition of his race for material prosperity and his longing for the culture and intellectual wisdom represented in the literature of his people; the son, Laurie, without ambition to justify his parents' sacrifices for him, without the strength of character to accept their stern religious convictions; and the daughter, Jessie, both responsible and ambitious. Give instances of the working of racial prejudice in the lives of these people, and discuss the wide gulf which separates Jessie and the Gentile, Arthur Bretton.

Discuss the characteristics and aims of each of the three natives: the reliable Zulu, Sixpence, who looks upon the whites as weaklings and, untouched by white civilization, longs only for return to his kraal;

the Basuto, Zachariah, "radiating sloth and arrogance," who craves equality with the white man and lusts after his women; and the clergyman, Sono Mohlalisi who plans to unite all Africans in a single race, who does "what the Lord God suggested" and invariably lands in the white man's jail. Is the menace of these men to the white man's supremacy any the less, or is their individuality in any way obscured, by their status as servants?

You recall, Sarah Gertrude Millin speaks of "the Jew, who had nowhere to be except in an alien world." Does Mr. Segal make this alien world real to you? In his dramatization of the injustice and suffering involved in both the Jew-Gentile and the Negro-white relationships, has he struck rather a universal than a purely South African chord? Comment.

*Additional Reading:*

*The Dream and The Desert*, by Uys Krige. (Eight short stories and a one-act play by an established Afrikaner poet, playwright, and short story writer.)

*The Lying Days*, by Nadine Gordimer.



## PROGRAM XII

### THE ONE HOPE

"I see only one hope for our country, and that is when white men and black men, desiring neither power nor money, but desiring only the good of their country, come together to work for it."

—MSIMANGU

Alan Paton's two novels of South Africa, *Cry, the Beloved Country* and *Too Late the Phalarope*, become a memorable experience to all who read them. The two novels have different themes and tell totally different stories but in both Mr. Paton speaks in a voice powerful and compassionate of the great fear which dominates white and black alike, and of the necessity for justice and cooperation to take the place of hate and repression.

Born in 1903 of English settlers in South Africa, Mr. Paton was reared in a deeply religious atmosphere by a father who was a civil servant and a mother who was a teacher. At twenty-two he became a teacher in a native Zulu school at Ixopo, South Africa, and later in Pietermaritzburg College. In 1935 he was made principal of Dieploof Reformatory in Johannesburg. After twenty-five years of teaching and penal work, his creative urge to write, he has said, burst its bounds in *Cry, the Beloved Country*, his first novel. An expert in penal reform and Africa's best known novelist, he lives today in Natal.

#### 1. *The Iron Law*

"Then out of the harsh world of rock and stone they had come to the grass country, all green and smiling . . . and as God had chosen them for a people, so did they choose him for their God, cherishing their separateness that was now His Will."

*Too Late the Phalarope*, by Alan Paton

Fill in the background of this book, from the time a hundred years before when Pieter van Vlaanderen's people arrived in the grass country and made it their own, taking it from their conquered enemies, Maduna's black people. Tell of their pride of race and of their iron law of racial separation.

Picture the Boer community of Venterspan, surrounded by its fertile farms. Tell something of the life of the people, its austere simplicity relieved by their interest in rugby football, their parties, jokes, welfare work, and churchgoing.

Speak of the place of Pieter van Vlaanderen's family in this society, and tell the story of Pieter, a young man excellent in every way but one. Stress the two determining relationships: to his devoted young

wife, Nella, who in her pious frigidity failed him; and to his stern Old Testament patriarch of a father, Jakob, from whom understanding came too late.

This powerful old Boer, Jakob, is one of the memorable creations of today's literature. Picture him, a man whose authority extended throughout the grass country; who had never touched a woman other than his wife; to whom religion was a matter of obedience, the latter a word he understood better than the word "love." To such a man, encased in his uncompromising religious and racial righteousness, could the gentleness and breadth of his son have been other than anathema?

In contrast to this rocklike old man discuss: Pieter's gentle mother, who from the years of his childhood had feared for him; his aunt, warned of disaster by the instinct of love; Kappie, the Jew, who loved music and stamps and the dark young lieutenant of police; and Massingham, the Englishman, captain of police, silent, austere, and compassionate. Picture the girl, Stephanie, set apart in the shame of her race and her manner of life, symbol of all evil in a white world, yet in care for the old woman and love of her child not to be disregarded.

Read from the climactic passages descriptive of Jakob's reception of the news of his son's sin, and from the mother's message of love. In thus contrasting the relentlessness of arrogance which can only end in death, and the compassion of understanding which heals and restores, is Paton not only speaking directly to his own countrymen but stating in dramatic terms a truth none dare ignore?

## 2. *A Great Quarrel*

"And what was there evil in their desires, in their hunger? That men should walk upright in the land where they were born, and be free to use the fruits of the earth, what was there evil in it?"

—KUMALO

*Cry, the Beloved Country*, by Alan Paton

This novel is a powerful indictment of a social system. Fill in the picture of the city of Johannesburg, into which sound and able-bodied African natives of both sexes disappear. Tell of Alexandra, where a black man can own land among thieves and prostitutes; of Claremont, the "garbage-heap of the proud city"; and of Shantytown, village of sack and plank and iron. Discuss the conditions which drive young native men and women to crime: lack of decent housing, schooling and recreation; labor policies; broken tribes and families; confusion and strange fears in this city of white scorn and indifference, where even the voice of the church speaks only empty words to the black man.

Picture the black man's valley of Ndotsheni, a desolate valley, not kept or guarded, a valley of old men and women, of mothers who cried for rain, and of children who died for lack of milk. Picture the hills above, where the white men have their farms, hills "grass-covered and rolling, and . . . lovely beyond any singing."

Tell the story of the parson, Kumalo, and his son Absalom, and of the white man, James Jarvis.

Noting the beauty of the book's "magic symbolic Zulu idiom" and reading from the simple cadenced prose, discuss Kumalo's personality and character: his courtesy, restraint, and humanity in a city where the white man is afraid even to be just; the integrity of his relationships; the fortitude of his quiet agony; his humility and compassion in the presence of James Jarvis; his moral strength in the unwavering belief that the dawn of emancipation will come. Do you recall in English fiction a figure more admirable or more moving?

Others who reach the statue of men are Msimangu, the priest, and, to a lesser degree, the young white man who was afraid, yet who dared to help an old broken black man from the courtroom, a thing not lightly done. Speak of the qualities of these two, and of kind Mrs. Lithebe, and of the really wonderful small boy with the laughter inside him.

The voice of Arthur Jarvis in this novel is undoubtedly the voice of the author himself. Read excerpts from Jarvis's papers on the white man's exploitation of the black race and the dilemma of Christian civilization. Is this truly the voice of a man who was not afraid to be just? Was there indeed a brightness, a goodness, in Arthur Jarvis as there is in Kumalo, a black man "who has learned to be humble and yet who desires to be something that is himself," and in Msimangu, and in James Jarvis, though he did not himself know it?

Writing recently in the *New York Times Book Review*, a French critic remarked: "The honor of a true literature lies in that it never allows itself to be domesticated to the level of propaganda. The mission of a true literature has always been to create and sustain a great quarrel within the national conscience." In his quite evident and deep feeling on this subject of just race relations, has Mr. Paton in this novel allowed his art "to be domesticated to the level of propaganda," or do you feel that the mission of *Cry, the Beloved Country* must be to "create and sustain a great quarrel" not alone in the conscience of Africa but in that of men everywhere?

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